

7/6/03

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing with regard to the proposed legislation for reimbursement of the Captel Voice Over service. The benefits of this system cannot be underestimated. This system allows the speaking portion of the deaf population access to resources not always available via conventional TTY. My boyfriend has been hard of hearing since birth. Despite considerable obstacles, he has managed to forge a successful career in medical device and catheter development. He has been able to complete degrees in Chemistry, Pharmacy and Materials Engineering. This spring, his condition became much worse. Now, he is completely deaf. Due to unforeseen circumstances at his company, a group of about ten engineers were laid off. Needless to say, convincing a potential employer to utilize TTY or instant messaging is not a small obstacle to overcome in searching for a job. Further, most employers are completely unwilling to even consider that a deaf candidate would be able to perform the necessary duties of a catheter development engineer due the requirement of using a telephone to contact vendors for materials and coordinate between plants located in other parts of the country. The Captel system would eliminate all of these issues for him. They would allow him to continue performing his job as he did when he had hearing.

I am astounded how little accomodation is actually made for the deaf population when the law is reduced to practice. Employers do not actively recruit deaf candidates. Captioning is available in a sporadic fashion and may soon be a thing of the past. Open captioned movies are scheduled very rarely and the selection is horrid, at best. The new technology, Rear Window Captioning is very convenient for the hearing population in that it does not unduly burden them. However, it is cumbersome and difficult to read and use. We planned an entire day around a showing of "The Ring" last year on our vacation. We were not able to see it, however, because it was bumped by a showing of another popular movie, made from an MTV skit. I cannot even begin to express my disappointment and outrage at that decision. This is typical of our culture's lack of education and appreciation for the needs of our deaf population.

Please approve the Captel system....SOON!! Thank you so much.

Sandra Regnell
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